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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [KWBG](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN: PRESIDENT'S SPEECH PROMPTS CALLS FOR
CONCRETE ACTION

REF: A. AMMAN 1264
[B](#). AMMAN 1263
[C](#). AMMAN 1261

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary: In the wake of the President's Cairo speech, Jordanian contacts continue to focus primarily on language pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The President's citation of Islamic scriptures and respect for Islam's cultural contribution throughout history was seen as a high point of the balanced speech. After the weekend, many Jordanians are now calling for immediate and concrete actions to maintain momentum after Cairo. Some contacts believe Arab countries should also propose new initiatives to further peace discussions. A small set of detractors allege that the Cairo speech was deliberately timed to influence elections in Iran and Lebanon. End Summary.

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Focus on Next Steps

[2](#). (C) Following the weekend, PolOffs engaged with government and civil society contacts for a more detailed discussion of the President's June 4 speech in Cairo. There is speculation about the long-term impact of the speech on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and debates about whether or not there truly has been a shift in U.S. policy. Many believe the speech demonstrated the Administration's "strong willpower" and the President's "personal interest" in resolving the conflict. The President's recognition of the plight of Palestinians was appreciated, although some said the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza should have been mentioned directly. This empathy for the Palestinians was called "the first from an American head of state."

[3](#). (C) However, the speech has also raised expectations and many are calling for new policy initiatives and concrete actions. In general, our contacts want more details about what the speech will mean on the ground, and what it will mean for the future of America's relationship with Israel. While they seemed to understand that this was not meant to be the announcement of any specific plan, interlocutors said they were left wanting more. However, one referred to the speech as "the infrastructure for a new era."

[4](#). (C) Discussion arose about not just what the Americans should do next, but also what concrete steps should be taken by Arab states. Two religious contacts said that regional governments needed to internalize the speech's messages and develop a plan to demonstrate the Arabs' willingness to work for peace. The President's mention of the Arab Peace Initiative as a beginning rather than an end left some government contacts puzzled, but non-governmental (NGO) contacts saw it as a call to action at all levels of society.

Respect for Islam

¶5. (C) Many of our contacts are talking about the refreshingly respectful tone about religious practices in Islam. A civil society leader commented that the recognition of Islam's history of tolerance struck a positive note and lent credibility and balance to the speech. Contacts believe the speech will begin to break down the stereotypes of America in the Muslim world by using scriptures to demonstrate points of common agreement.

Conspiracy Theories

¶6. (C) The inevitable crop of conspiracy theories is also starting to surface. The most prominent holds that the speech was cynically timed to influence elections in both Iran and Lebanon, and represents nothing more than a temporary gesture to pull votes away from Islamists who could thwart American designs for the region. Others see the location of the speech as a tacit stamp of approval for the Egyptian government, and note that there was little criticism of the host government.
Beecroft